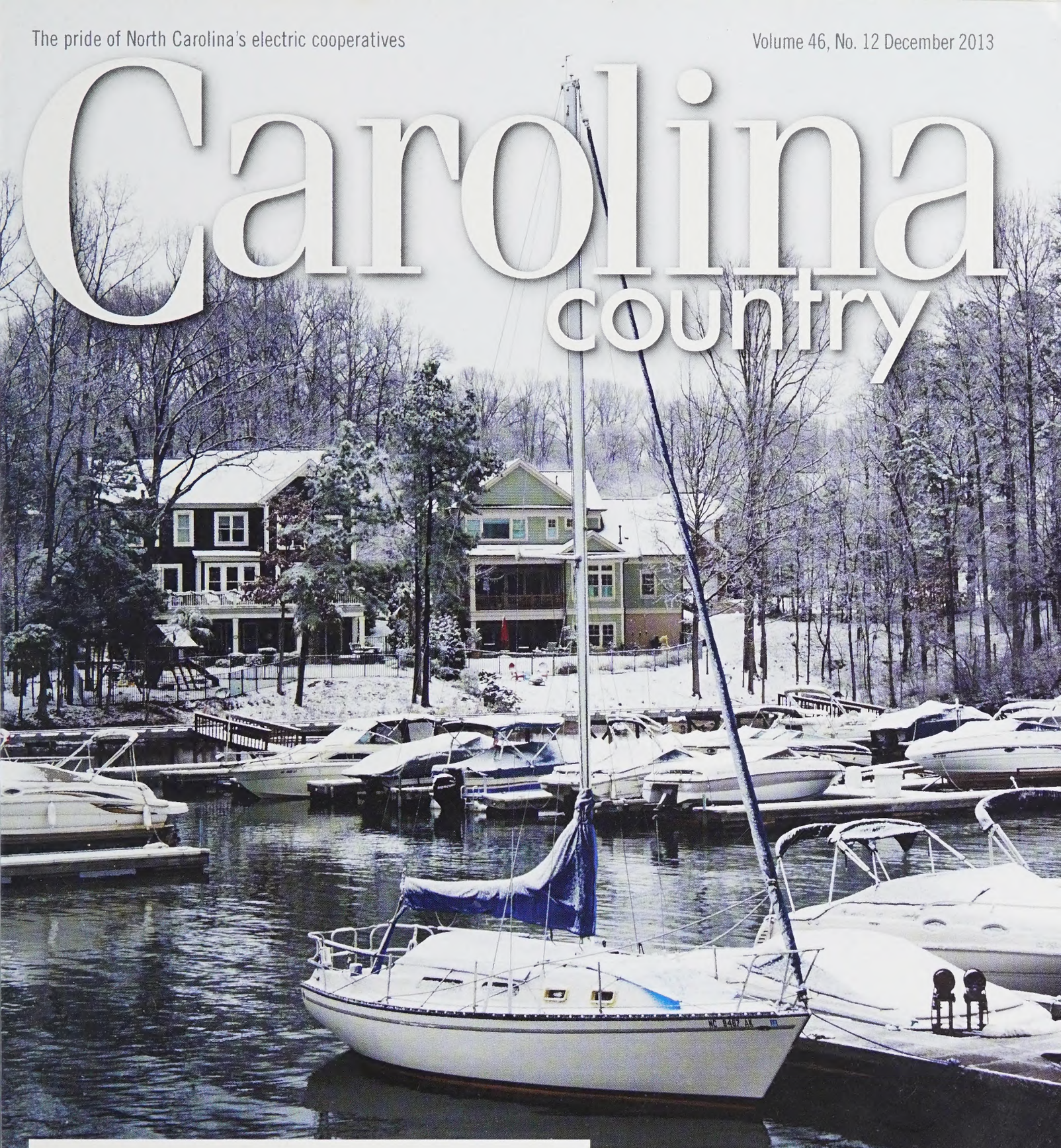
The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 46, No. 12 December 2013

Carolina country



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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

PERIODICAL

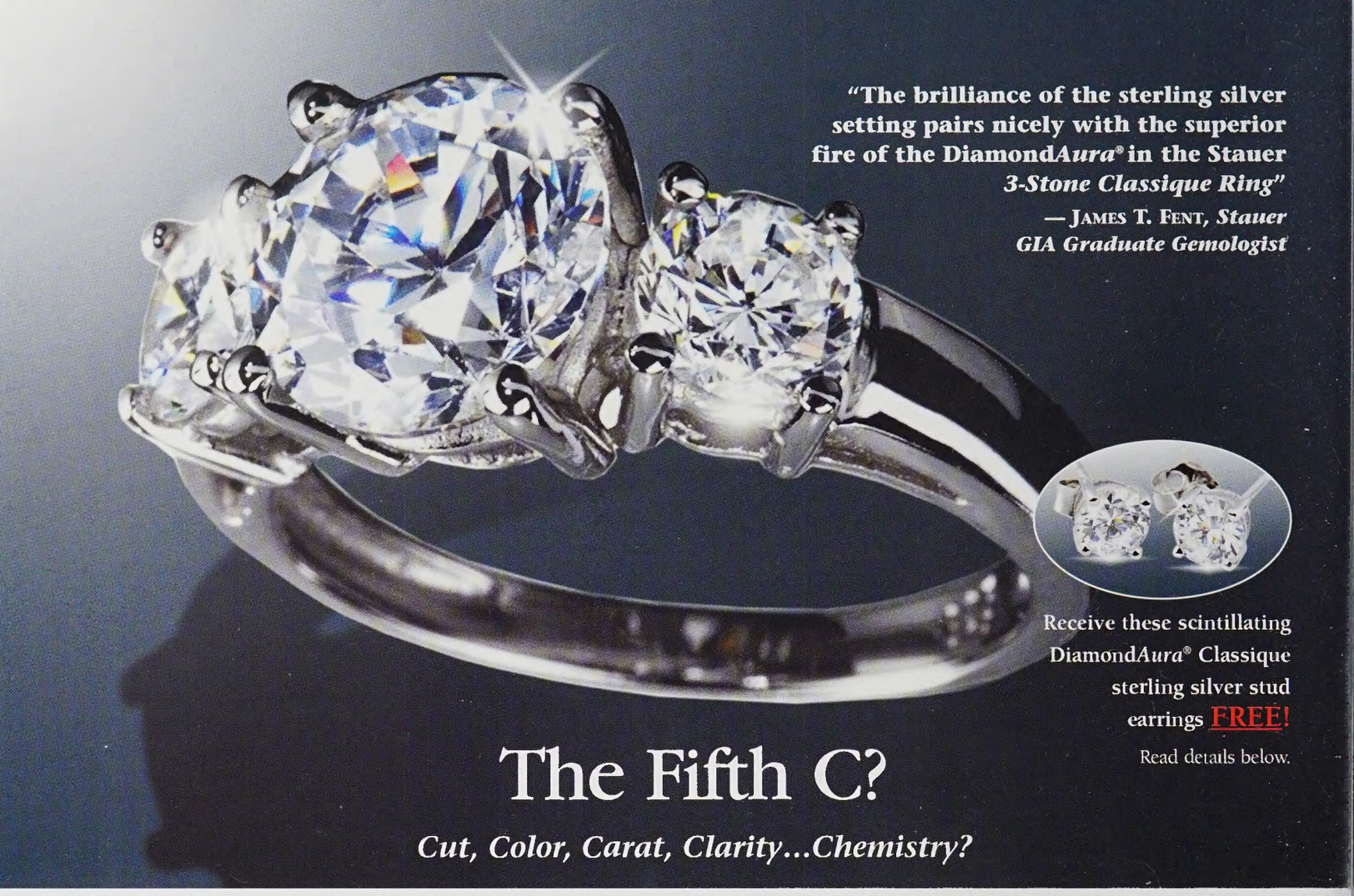
INSIDE THIS MONTH:

Winter's speckled trout

Christmas memories

The path of electricity

Protecting the electricity grid—page 4



"The brilliance of the sterling silver setting pairs nicely with the superior fire of the Diamond*Aura*® in the Stauer *3-Stone Classique Ring*"
— James T. Fent, *Stauer GIA Graduate Gemologist*

Receive these scintillating Diamond*Aura*® Classique sterling silver stud earrings FREE!
Read details below.

The Fifth C?

Cut, Color, Carat, Clarity...Chemistry?

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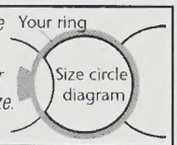
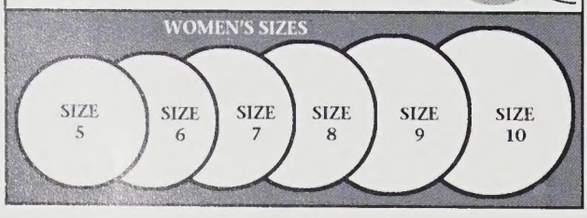
Clarity	"IF"	Clear
Dispersion/Fire	0.044	0.066
2 ½ c.t.w. ring	$60,000+	$145

Place one of your own rings on top of one of the circle diagrams. Your ring size is the circle that matches the inside diameter of your ring. If your ring falls between sizes, order the next larger size.





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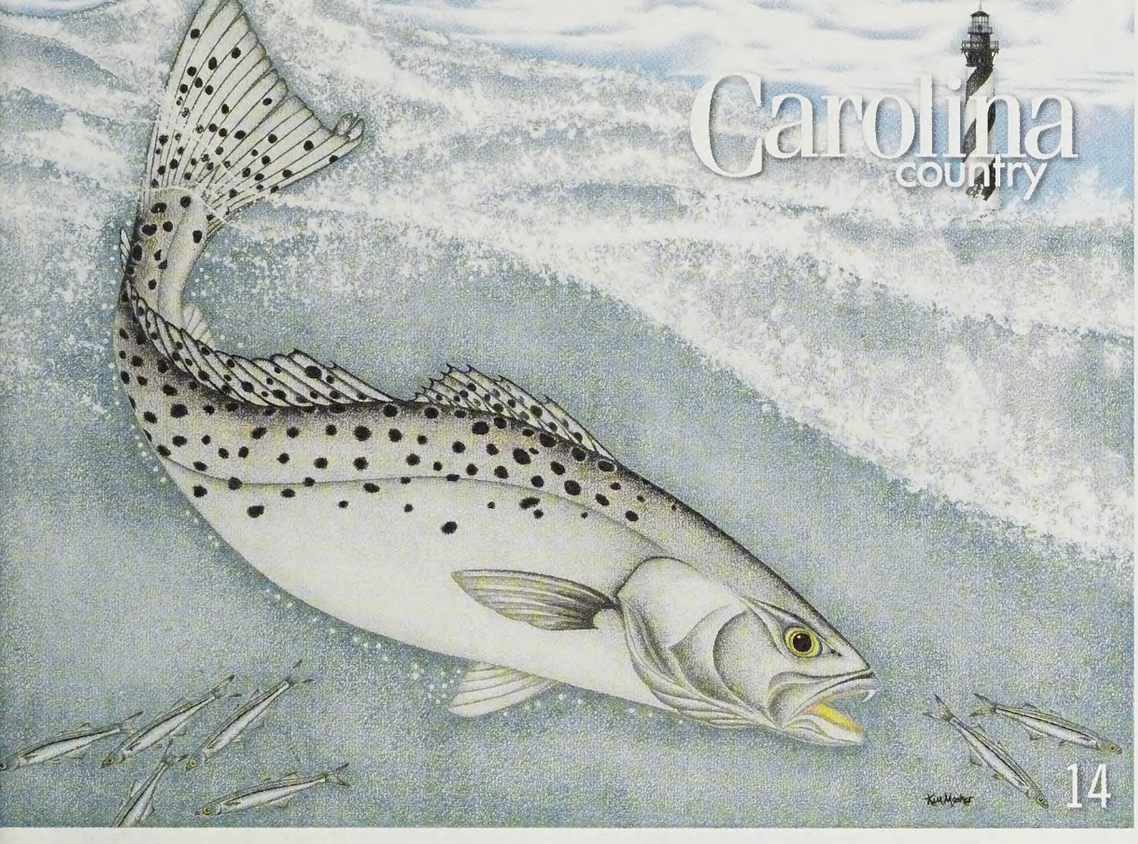

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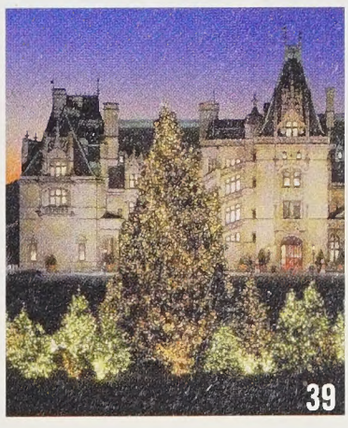
ON THE COVER
The marina at Marina Shores, Lake Norman, Cornelius, after a snow last winter. The Captains Point neighborhood is in the background. The Peninsula Yacht Club will float its Lighted Boat Parade on the lake Saturday, Dec. 14. (Photography by Molly Rountree –"Live. Laugh. Photograph." mollyrountreephotography.com)



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Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

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Preventing cyber sabotage

By Jo Ann Emerson

Security of the nation's electric grid has received a lot of attention lately. Reports of high-profile hacking attempts on electrical facilities by parties foreign and domestic, mischievous and nefarious, keep making front-page news. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the energy sector was the target of more than 40 percent of all reported cyber attacks last year.

In today's heightened political landscape, some have suggested that government mandates—as opposed to our existing system that provides flexibility to meet ever-evolving threats—are necessary to protect the electric grid from cyber assaults. But it's not certain more regulations will make us safer. Consider these points:

- Government mandates can't keep pace with innovation. Utilities, including electric co-ops, are always deploying new technology—and so are cyber criminals and terrorists. Top-down mandates, by their very nature, will only address known dangers; such a command-and-control approach means we'll always be fighting yesterday's battle.
- "Gold plated" cyber security measures are not the answer. It's possible to build a car that will survive any crash. But the cost of such a vehicle would be astronomical. Utilities need the latitude to balance risk and cost for the good of the consumer.
- Compliance is not a deterrent. For some, federal rules create a false sense of well-being. The reasoning goes like this: "If I'm following all of the cyber security regulations that apply to me, then my system must be secure." However, bureaucracy can't promulgate processes that address every contingency. And any complacency opens the door to a possible cyber strike.

Fortunately, America's electric cooperatives have taken a lead role on this issue. Electric cooperatives have spent thousands of hours helping to write Critical Infrastructure Protection standards for the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the nation's grid watchdog. Also, the Cooperative Research Network (CRN)—the research and development arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association—has developed the "Guide to Developing a Cyber Security and Risk Mitigation Plan." This document, touted by the U.S. Department of Energy as a prime example for other utilities to follow (and endorsed by the head of grid security at IBM), provides a set of scalable, online tools that can help electric co-ops strengthen their cyber security posture.

As perhaps the first approach to advancing cyber security at the distribution level, the "Guide to Developing a Cyber Security and Risk Mitigation Plan" ties into the innate co-op sense of member responsibility and commitment to continuous improvement. While no one suggests it will prevent every possible act of cyber sabotage, any step at mitigation means a significant leap toward bolstered cyber security.

The bottom line is that over the past few years, the North American electric grid has become more secure because of industry efforts. On the executive-branch level, NRECA has discussed co-op leadership and concerns surrounding this subject in meetings with President Obama and U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz.

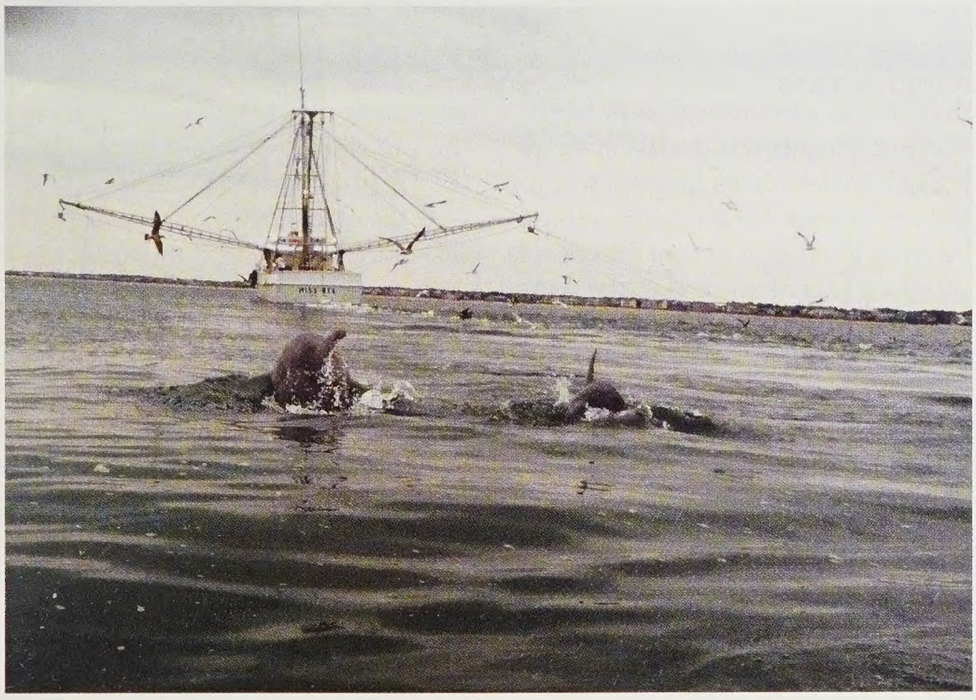
The perils posed by cyber attacks are real. But thanks to CRN and standards fashioned by electric utilities under the current voluntary, collaborative NERC framework, electric cooperatives will be better armed to defend against any cyber menace.

Jo Ann Emerson is CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Shalom

This is a mural I'm painting in downtown Lincolnton, just off the court square circle, on the side of the former Lighthouse Christian Bookstore, now Shalom Baptist Church. It measures 15-by-50 feet. I've been working on it since June 7, battling all the summer's rain. It is for the church as well as something for all of Lincolnton to enjoy.

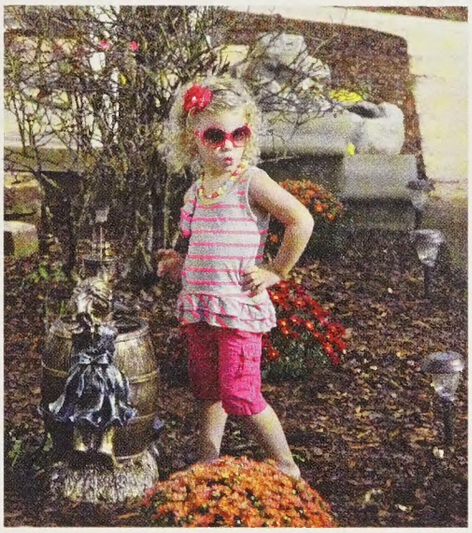
Mark Smith, Lincolnton, Rutherford EMC



Off Holden Beach

This is my father's shrimp boat along the North Carolina coast off Holden Beach.

Scott Hewett, Brunswick EMC



Jazzy

This is my daughter Jasmine Faith Kondas, aka "Jazzy," ready for fall.

Daniel Kondas, Taylorsville, EnergyUnited

Out my window

I love doing dishes because looking out the kitchen window there are always colorful birds to see, no matter what the season. This cardinal is interested in what these goldfinches are getting.

Christine Paszko, West End, Randolph EMC

Now what?

We have a different kind of squirrel problem.

Laurie Nickerson, Stanfield, Union Power Cooperative

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JACOB'S LOG:

Five guys and a flat-screen TV

Another Christmastime adventure in the High Country

By Jacob Brooks

Here is a tale of my first Black Friday experience that took place two years ago with my brother, Josh, and three of our dearest friends. I will protect the anonymity and personal pride of our friends, however, by not sharing their names. Josh can get over it.

Long story short, the five of us found ourselves outside of an h.h. gregg home appliance store in Winston-Salem, about an hour and 15 minutes' drive from Ennice, Alleghany County. We stood in line with the die-hard shoppers, laughing about how ridiculous it was that we had set off on this adventure without any intentions of making a purchase. (We've never been successful at planning our adventures.)

But when the flier advertising the sales made its way through the crowd, we found hidden treasure: a 60-inch, high-definition, flat-screen television with all the bells and whistles for less than half the retail price. There were only five of those suckers, and we wanted one. Josh and I had contemplated surprising our father with a new TV for Christmas. Of course, we certainly weren't envisioning the Titanic of televisions. We were thinking something much smaller and not so obnoxious. But, as any man would, I began imagining seeing my Packers and Braves playing on this beauty. I felt like if Tim "The Tool Man" Taylor had a TV, it would be this one.

The doors opened at midnight, and we raced for this "door buster" item. Like lions after a gazelle, we pounced on our prey. I'm ashamed to say that the story becomes even more ridiculous from here.

One problem with purchasing a large television is finding a way to get it home. As you might expect, we didn't make the necessary preparations. Our car was already a little cramped with

the five of us. Adding a gigantic television into the mix was the last thing we needed. We laid down the back seats in our Ford Escape (that's right, a vehicle barely large enough to haul four people and three bags of groceries), and were able to fit in the television all catty-cornered. By doing so, we eliminated seating room for myself, Josh and Comrade #1.

But, like all rural Americans, we carry a can-do attitude.

Josh led the way by climbing underneath the television, and we followed. That's right, the three of us lay flat on our backs resting this behemoth of a television on our bodies as we traveled back to Ennice. I wish I could tell you there were no mishaps along the way, but the police officer who pulled us over certainly dampened the mood.

I saw the blue lights bouncing of off the interior of the car, and I knew right away that I was going to be in big, big trouble. We pulled the car over and all immediately began to panic. We had been traveling only 55 mph up the interstate and could not believe we were being pulled. We already knew this was going to be quite a story to tell. We just hoped for a happy ending.

As the officer made his way to the side of the vehicle, I felt my whole body tremble with anxiety. "That's it," I said. "We're all going to jail."

A special someone, however, was looking out for us throughout this ridiculous adventure. The State Highway Patrolman made his way to the vehicle and just informed Comrade #2 of our busted license plate light. He never noticed the three individuals lying under the giant television box in the back. We received a warning ticket and sheepishly made our way back to Ennice.

Jacob Brooks in 2010 represented Blue Ridge Electric and North Carolina on the electric cooperatives' national Youth Leadership Council. A native of Alleghany County, he is a senior at Appalachian State University where he is president of Appalachian Student Ambassadors.

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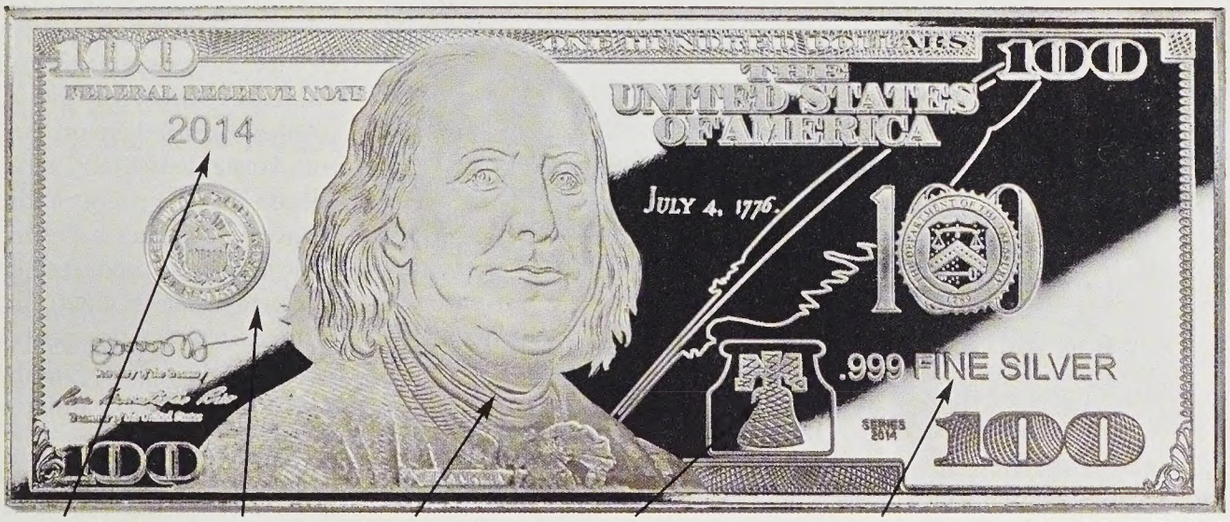

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John Lemire

A new solar farm at QVC Rocky Mount produces more electricity

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, the Touchstone Energy cooperative based in Tarboro, along with its statewide power supplier North Carolina EMC, joined retail shopping giant QVC recently in opening a new solar energy field in the Rocky Mount area.

The new solar farm on 11 acres comprises 11,564 solar electric panels at QVC's distribution center off US 64 in Kingsboro, between Rocky Mount and Tarboro. The facility has a sister farm assembled in 2008 on seven acres at the same location. Together, the two solar farms can produce 5.8 million kilowatt-hours of electricity per year. QVC says producing this much power from renewable energy equates to reducing CO2 emissions in the atmosphere of 458,766 gallons of gasoline.

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC is the electricity provider to the facility, and the cooperative was instrumental in taking advantage of resources to bring the QVC to Rocky Mount. NCEMC will purchase the energy produced by both QVC solar farms and return it to the grid.

QVC Rocky Mount has been in Edgecombe County since 2000 and employs more than 1,000 people. During peak seasons, the company employs as many as 1,500 people. Other QVC sustainability initiatives at the site include:

- A recycling program that salvages 4 million pounds of corrugate and 100,000 pounds of plastic recycling per year.
- Warehouse lighting using energy-efficient T5 fluorescent fixtures and motion lighting sensors.
- High efficiency HVAC units and LED lighting installed in all dock lights.
- A "white roof" that reduces cooling costs.
- A community garden created for employees to grow fresh vegetables for local food banks.
- Sheep on the premises that have reduced the need for gas-powered lawn mowers.

Energy Efficiency Tip

If you're expecting guests for holiday festivities, consider giving your heating unit a break. With the oven cranked up and the house packed with people, the temperature will rise on its own. Also make sure it has a clean filter so it can work as efficiently as possible all winter long. Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: TogetherWeSave.com

Farms and small businesses can get free energy audits

Rural small businesses and farms whose annual energy costs exceed $10,000 can get a no-cost energy efficiency assessment by Waste Reduction Partners. An energy assessment can identify cost-effective energy-saving measures that a business can implement.

An experienced energy engineer from Waste Reduction Partners (WRP) will conduct the energy audit. Waste Reduction Partners is a team of 60 staff and volunteer retired engineers who have provided over 1,800 energy and waste reduction assessments across North Carolina. The work has resulted in an estimated $50.1 million in utility cost savings.

WRP funding support comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The energy audit is an on-site assessment and written report which provides a preliminary cost-benefit analysis of recommended energy efficiency measures along with financing suggestions. The energy audit begins with a utility bill analysis and survey of major energy-using equipment for efficiency opportunities. WRP engineers typically identify no- and low-cost energy efficiency measures that can save a business 10 to 20 percent.

Rand Smith, electric services manager at the Blue Ridge Electric cooperative based in Lenoir, said "Waste Reduction Partners has been a valued resource in providing on-site energy assessments to qualifying Blue Ridge Electric members—such as non-profits, commercial and industrial accounts—to help them become more energy efficient and improve load factors."

Who is eligible?

Rural small businesses, as defined by the Small Business Administration, are eligible for the WRP energy assessment. The Small Business Association website tells how to determine what defines a small business. Rural is defined as communities less than 50,000 in population.

For more information, contact Russ Jordan at Russjordan.wrp@windstream.net, or by phone at (828) 251-7477, or visit wastereductionpartners.org

Protect your electronics, prevent hazards

Big-ticket electronics, such as televisions, computers and gaming consoles, are at the top of many holiday wish lists—but safety may not be. Purchasing, installing, and operating these items safely protects not only the expensive equipment, but also your entire home. The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) offers the following tips.

Safety tips

- Always purchase electrical devices from a reputable retailer that you trust. Be especially wary when making online purchases.
- Check that all electrical items are certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Intertek (ETL).
- Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions before use.
- Send warranty and product registration forms for new items to manufacturers in order to be notified about product recalls. Recall information is also available on the website of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission cpsc.gov
- Never install an exterior television or radio antenna close enough to contact power lines if it falls.
- Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit into a two-prong outlet.
- Keep cords out of reach of children and pets.
- Make sure entertainment centers and computer workstations have enough space around them for ventilation of electronic equipment.
- Keep liquids, including drinks, away from electrical devices. Spills can result in dangerous shocks or fires.
- Unplug equipment when not in use to save energy and reduce the risks for shocks or fires. Power strips or surge protectors make a good central turn-off point.
- Always unplug electrical items by grasping the plug firmly rather than pulling on the cord.
- If you receive any kind of shock from a large appliance or any other electrical device, stop using it until an electrician has checked it.
- If an appliance smokes or sparks, or if you feel a tingle or light shock when it's on, stop using it. Discard and replace it or have it repaired by an authorized service provider.

Inspect lighting wires periodically to make sure they are intact and not warm to the touch.

Extension cords

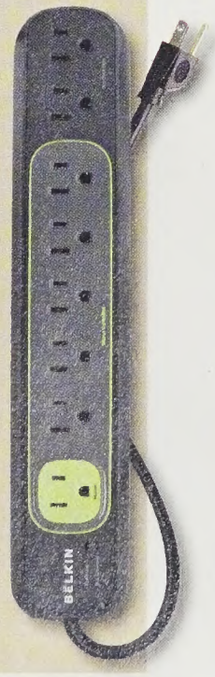
- Extension cords are meant to provide a temporary solution. They should not be used as a long-term or permanent electrical circuit.
- Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way. Touching even a single exposed strand can result in an electric shock or burn.
- Only use weather-resistant, heavy gauge extension cords marked "for outdoor use" outside.
- Keep all outdoor extension cords clear of snow and standing water.
- Arrange furniture so that there are outlets available for equipment without the use of extension cords.
- Do not place power cords or extension cords in high traffic areas or under carpets, rugs, or furniture (to avoid overheating and tripping hazards), and never nail or staple them to the wall or baseboard.

Holiday lights

- Never leave lights on overnight or when no one is home.
- Do not overload electrical outlets. Most lights are designed to connect no more than three strands. Inspect the wires periodically to make sure they are intact and not warm to the touch.
- Only use lights that have been approved by an independent testing laboratory.
- Replace any strands that show signs of damage, such as bare or frayed wires, broken bulbs or loose connections. Faulty lights can send an electrical charge through a tree and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with a branch.

Surge protector or power strip?

Although surge protectors and power strips both allow you to plug several devices in one location, it is important to understand that they are not interchangeable. A true surge protector includes internal components that divert or suppress the extra current from surges, protecting your valuable electronics from electrical spikes, while a power strip simply provides more outlets for a circuit.



This Belkin surge protector also offers energy-saving options.

For more information, visit holidaysafety.org

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– Janet F.

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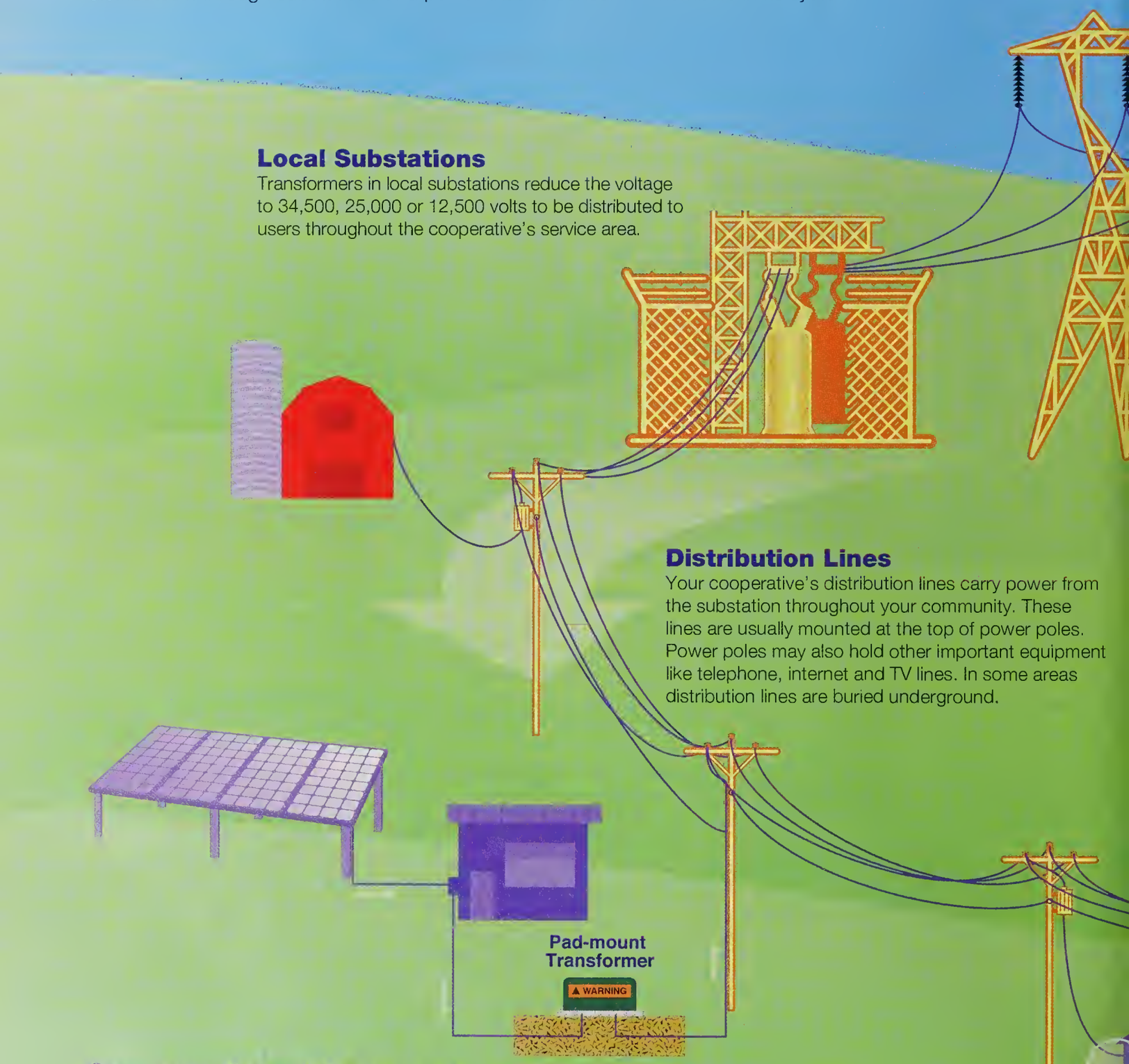
THE PATH OF electricity

Electricity often travels long distances before reaching your home or business. Your electric cooperative transports power produced at generating facilities and distributes it through substations and power lines to consumer-members in its system.



Local Substations

Transformers in local substations reduce the voltage to 34,500, 25,000 or 12,500 volts to be distributed to users throughout the cooperative's service area.

Distribution Lines

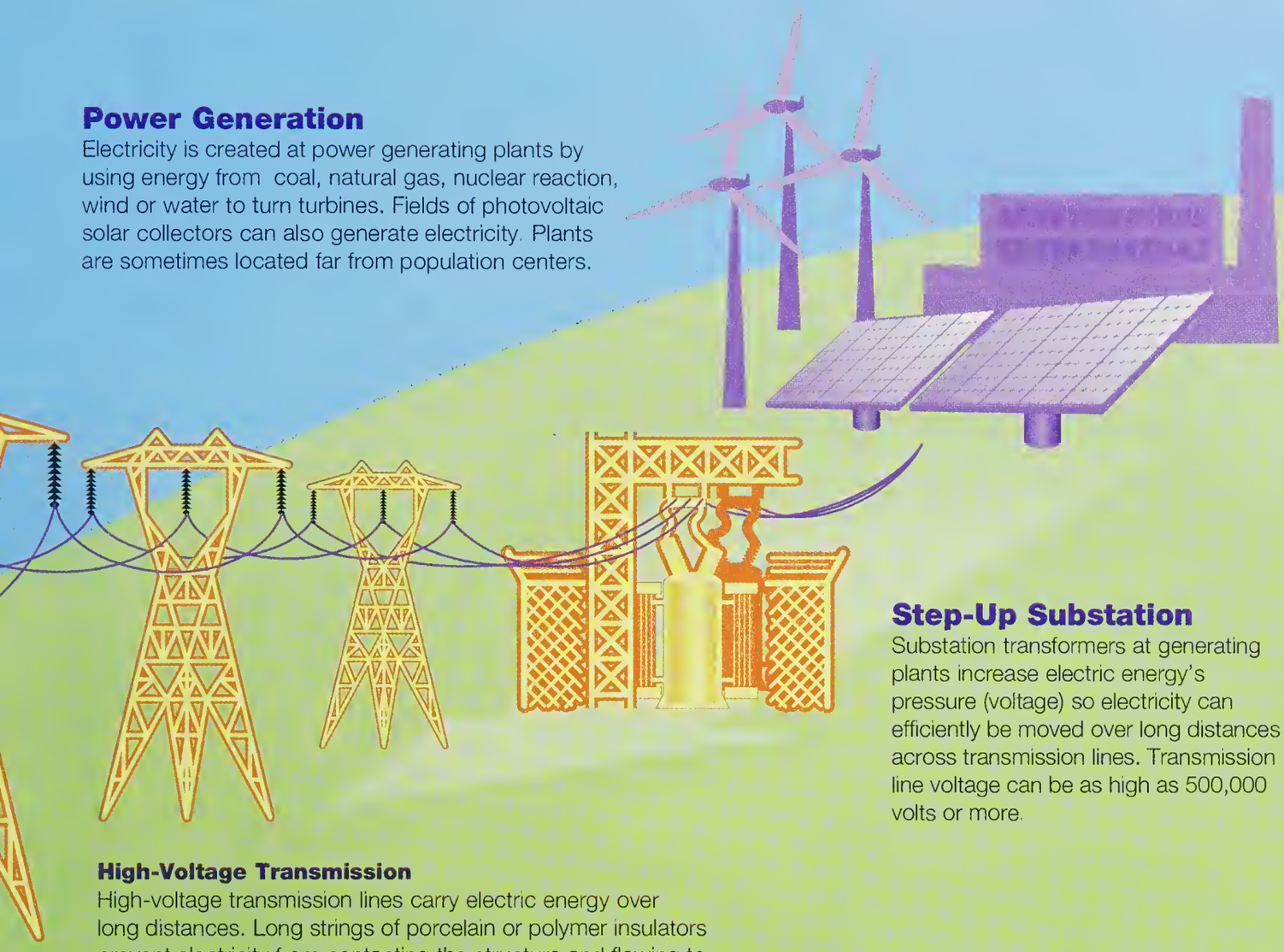
Your cooperative's distribution lines carry power from the substation throughout your community. These lines are usually mounted at the top of power poles. Power poles may also hold other important equipment like telephone, internet and TV lines. In some areas distribution lines are buried underground.

Consumer-Owned Generation

Most electric power is produced by large-scale generating plants located many miles away from consumers. Consumers today can own their own renewable power supply (such as solar or wind) and sell power back to the power company directly, or consumers can use self-generated power to serve their own homes or businesses.

Power Generation

Electricity is created at power generating plants by using energy from coal, natural gas, nuclear reaction, wind or water to turn turbines. Fields of photovoltaic solar collectors can also generate electricity. Plants are sometimes located far from population centers.



Step-Up Substation

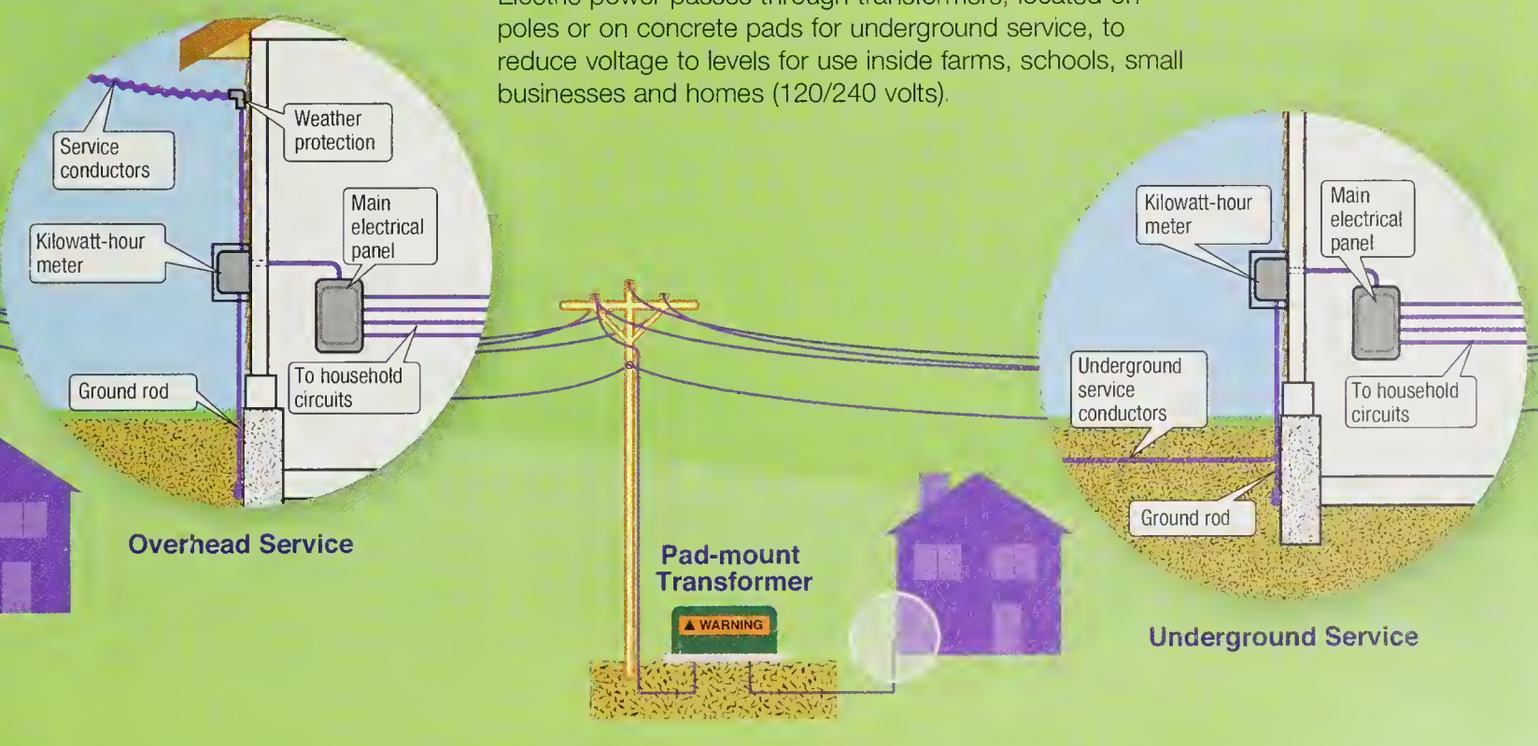
Substation transformers at generating plants increase electric energy's pressure (voltage) so electricity can efficiently be moved over long distances across transmission lines. Transmission line voltage can be as high as 500,000 volts or more.

High-Voltage Transmission

High-voltage transmission lines carry electric energy over long distances. Long strings of porcelain or polymer insulators prevent electricity from contacting the structure and flowing to the ground.

End-User Delivery

Electric power passes through transformers, located on poles or on concrete pads for underground service, to reduce voltage to levels for use inside farms, schools, small businesses and homes (120/240 volts).



A MEDITATION ON *the speckled trout*

By Kevin McCabe

In the mid-1960s, my father gave me two of the best gifts I would ever receive. One was a light-action, seven-foot rod. The second was my first trip fishing for speckled trout in the rough autumn surf. I vividly remember casting a red-headed Mirro Lure into the rolling waves at Onslow Beach. A swift current carried my lure along with all the anticipation a 10- year-old kid could contain. The ocean bottom there was not sand, surprisingly, but a slippery peat with scattered cypress stumps from long ago. The same mudflat would produce 10,000-year-old arrowheads at low tide. Then WHAM! Out of the cold white water came a large shaking yellow- mouth with two fangs. Both the fish and I were hooked. Nearly 50 years have come and gone, but the magic from that day is branded deep within my heart. I believe I am not alone when it comes to the mystique of speckled trout fishing in the evanescent surf.

Whether it's casting a fly into a secret spot in a mountain stream or fishing the perfect slough on a lonely beach, trout fishing has an amazing effect on the dedicated angler. The solitude and quietness are priceless. For many of us, the reward is in the search. Years ago I fished with a retired judge who told me, "You don't need trout to trout fish." It took a while, but I thoroughly understand what that means. Trout fishing has been a form of meditation for centuries.

Kevin McCabe's wife, artist Kim Mosher, has artist's proofs of her colored pencil work "Speck Attack." They are available for $30 each, among other art, from kimmosherdesigns.com

Many books have tried to convey the magic behind it. Years of experience are like the rings in a tree. Keep them deep inside if you want to be alone. Some fishermen are willing to cut corners to catch trout. They may not know or care about this sacred pastime that has been passed down for generations. The speckled trout history throughout eastern North Carolina is very interesting to say the least.

STORIES AND ETIQUETTE FROM BACK IN THE DAY

In the 1960s and 1970s there was a cast of characters I had the privilege to fish with: Gunner Charlie, Big John, Curtis Gray, and the Boogerman, to name a few. Other legendary names are out there, but they all fished way before my time. Sadly, many stories and names of this wonderful heritage are fading fast. Some of the older trout men told stories that were quite amazing. One particular story I always enjoyed was from an ancient angler. His grandfather was a slave and obviously a great trout man. He would go down to the beach with a long cane pole, twisted oiled line, and a handmade lure. He would lay the lure on the beach and walk towards

his "hole." (A knowledgeable trout man is usually casting in a small 10-foot circle.) After a throwing the lure out, he would walk backward, slowly jigging it through the trough. I like to describe it like teasing a cat with string. After picking a few trout out of each hole, he would return home and was allowed a portion of the day's bounty.

Many old rules of trout etiquette have gone out with the tide these days. The true trout men in the old days used only lures or single handmade jigs. Colors and weights were adjusted to fit the conditions of the day. Live baits, double jigs, and snagging were highly frowned upon among the most dedicated elders and respected trout men. They said it was like cheating, and they would literally run you down the beach using harsh language. I found that out the hard way in my early years after being scorned for using live minnows. Another general rule was never walk into an angler's trout hole without asking for permission first. That act could also get you into lots of trouble. Real trout men are more interested in locating the fish than actually catching them. I feel the same way, but I still take a couple home to eat.

THE REMAINS OF LEGENDARY FISHING PLACES

Historic trout fishing spots are also disappearing. Anyone who has ever fished for speckled trout in North Carolina has heard fabulous stories about New River Inlet, the old 172 Bridge in Sneads Ferry, the Buxton Jetties and the old fishing piers. Names like The Scotch Bonnet, Paradise Pier and Ocean City Pier have now become part of hurricane history, and all that remains beside them are whispers of epic trout fishing days on cold autumn mornings. Thankfully, there are still a few piers standing where the fine tradition continues. Many old-timers remember the ridge of giant oak trees that stood on North Topsail Island at New River Inlet. During the peak fall trout run, the tree line and bank would be filled with anglers casting on the outgoing tide. I spent many days under those oaks catching countless

> I am not alone when it comes to the mystique of speckled trout fishing in the evanescent surf.

numbers of speckled trout as a young man. It was rumored that lots of other treasures came from under those trees too. They were the same trees that Blackbeard hid behind. By the time you saw his top sails, he had you in his sights. Like the piers, the oaks were washed away by storms and time.

Looking back over the years is a natural instinct of all humans. With that said, I am very thankful that my father took the time to take me trout fishing one cold autumn day. It changed my life forever. The complete understanding of speckled trout and the nature around them has become a personal study. Because of one fishing trip nearly five decades ago, I have learned more about the ocean, the weather and shoreline dynamics than any institute of higher learning could ever teach. From the stars above, to what's buried in the sand below my feet, I see a clear picture that has made my life more rewarding. I can honestly say "thank you" to one speckled trout I let go on a cold day a long time ago.

© 2013. Kevin McCabe has been fishing and studying speckled trout in the surf for 47 years.

Speckled trout live in North Carolina's estuarine rivers and sounds and in the surf off our barrier islands. They are sensitive to freezing temperatures, so fish north of Virginia migrate here for the winter, according to the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries. Also known as spotted seatrout, speck and spotted weakfish, they are members of the drum family (Sciaenidae), not the trout family (Salmonidae). Popular among recreational fishermen, they average 15 to 25 inches and 2 to 4 pounds, but can grow as large as 40 inches and 12 pounds. They feed on shrimp, crabs and mullet.

He says that living on Hatteras Island next to the Cape Hatteras National Seashore provides him miles of beach to look for these fish through the fall and winter. The quiet winter months, he says, also provide time for writing that has become "a part-time hobby and a full-time ambition."

A 6-pounder I caught in December 2008.

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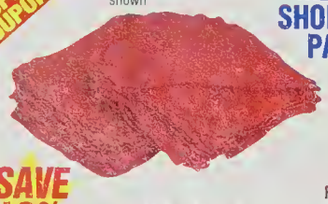

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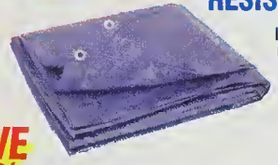

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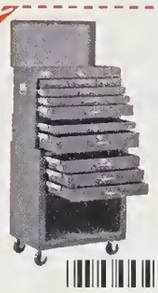
30", 11 DRAWER ROLLER CABINET



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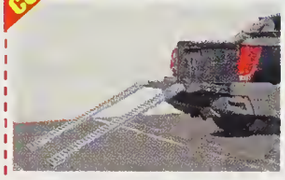

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Rescuing Top Gun

A Cleveland County woman's idea for finding lost and stolen horses has really taken off

By Hannah Miller

After a 20-mile freedom foray, Top Gun was returned to his owner, Tanya Fairweather, thanks to a report on netposse.com

Top Gun is one lucky mustang. He was a wild horse from out West who was broken to the saddle in North Carolina three years ago. Last April, the 6-year-old disappeared from a Chatham County trainer's facility. He was later seen hoofing it along NC 87, heading northwest.

"Heading for Montana, or something," says owner Tanya Fairweather of Ramseur.

He never got there. Thanks to the combined efforts of a sharp-eyed Randolph EMC member, Christina Aldridge, as well as Alamance County Animal Control officers, volunteers, and a hard-working network of horse lovers called NetPosse, Top Gun was reunited with Fairweather and her three children a week later. He had traveled more than 20 miles into southern Alamance County, where it took six hours for four Alamance Sheriff's Department Animal Control officers, aided by volunteers, to corner him in a fenced field the same day he was discovered missing.

"He was a nervous wreck," remembers one of the volunteers, Bud Thompson. "After he figured out nobody was going to hurt him, he was fine."

Animal Control, however, had a problem. The department keeps a list of Alamance livestock ownership for just such an emergency, but Top Gun was a mystery.

"We were calling people asking, 'You know somebody missing a horse?'" remembers Sgt. Jennifer Knight.

Then, several days later, enter Christina Aldridge, who has six horses of her own at her home in Snow Camp. She talked with her friend Bud Thompson about the energetic little horse he helped catch. The next day, on her Facebook page, she found a news feed with a dead-ringer description of the same horse, first posted on www.netposse.com and then relayed to her by someone else in the horse-owning community.

Thompson "was describing this horse to a T," she says. "Even to the brand on its neck," a holdover from Top Gun's days out West.

The horse's distraught owner had alerted NetPosse after she got over the first shock of her horse's disappearance. "I was really sick, I was so worried," says Tanya Fairweather.

Organized in Shelby more than a decade ago by horse owners Debi and Harold Metcalfe after their racking mare was stolen, the nationally active, all-volunteer nonprofit uses the Internet site, social media and a mammoth mailing list to get out the word when a horse goes missing.

"They reach out to the horse people, who care," says Aldridge. "It's almost like when one's missing, everybody owns the horse."

Aldridge got on the phone to Kim Webb Thompson, Bud's wife, and the Thompsons, after checking the missing-horse report on the NetPosse Web site, met Fairweather at the animal shelter, even though it was closed for the night. They turned a flashlight on the horse, "and that was him," remembers Fairweather, a horse massage therapist who operates Sonny's Equine Massage.

The next day, Top Gun was back at the Fairweather place, contentedly munching grass.

NetPosse works

NetPosse, known also as Stolen Horse International, posts several hundred alerts for missing and stolen horses each year, Debi Metcalfe says, and also lists other farm animals and equipment. Its recovery rate ranges from 23 to 42 percent yearly, she says. There's a $25 fee for listing.

Sometimes, the mere fact that an alert has been issued gives thieves second thoughts, Metcalfe says. "Lots of times when we get on it real quick, the horses are brought back. The heat gets too much."

NetPosse also educates on measures to thwart theft, like branding and insertion of microchips. But, says Aldridge, brands are not nationally registered. "And," she adds, "most people that are crooked enough to steal are not going to sell them in the area they stole them from."

Several of her horses have microchips, but, she believes, that is "nowhere near as effective and quick as NetPosse."

Hannah Miller is a Carolina Country contributing writer and photographer who lives in Charlotte. She wrote about Sunset Beach in September's magazine.

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Holiday-inspired dessert

This pecan pie has a chocolate twist

Savoring a homemade pie is a great way to end a holiday gathering. And introducing holiday-inspired flavor twists on familiar favorites such as pecan pie is perfect for those who crave a little variety.

Chocolate pecan pie

Serves: 10

- 1 refrigerated pie crust, (from 14.1-ounce package)
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 4 eggs
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup dark corn syrup
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon allspice
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups pecan halves

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line 9-inch deep dish pie plate with pie crust. Bake 7 minutes. Remove crust from oven. Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees.

Meanwhile, microwave chocolate chips and milk in medium microwavable bowl on High for 1 to 1½ minutes. Stir until smooth. Pour chocolate evenly over crust.

Beat eggs in large bowl. Add remaining ingredients; mix well. Slowly pour mixture over chocolate layer. Place ring of foil around edges of crust to prevent over-browning.

Bake 55 to 60 minutes or until filling is puffed and center is still soft enough to move when shaken gently. Cool completely on wire rack.

Flavored toppings

Here are two easy holiday toppings for pies.

Candy Cane Whipped Cream: Beat 1 cup heavy cream, ¼ cup confectioners' sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla extract and ¼ teaspoon peppermint extract in medium bowl with electric mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form.

Eggnog Whipped Cream: Beat 1 cup heavy cream, ½ teaspoon vanilla extract, ¼ teaspoon nutmeg and ¼ teaspoon rum extract in medium bowl with electric mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form.

"You'll love the smooth layers of rich chocolate and the crunch of pecans seasoned with cinnamon and allspice in this easy-to-make pecan pie."

—Mary Beth Harrington of the McCormick Kitchens.

—FamilyFeatures.com | All recipes courtesy of McCormick & Company, Inc.

A nourishing nut

The nutritious pecan provides high levels of magnesium and zinc and is an excellent source of oleic acid, a fatty acid found in olive oil. Pecans, like other nuts, are high in fat but an estimated 90 percent of the fat is monounsaturated fat. Monounsaturated fats lower total blood cholesterol and combat heart disease. Pecans are also believed to help fight some cancers.

North Carolina consistently ranks in the top 10 states in the nation for production of new and improved pecan varieties, according to the North Carolina Pecan Growers Association, based in Ivanhoe. For more about pecans, including more tasty recipes, visit ncpecans.org

A healthier holiday

Offer to bring a low-calorie dish to the festivities

Holidays are traditionally marked by celebration, family, and food. Here are some tips to help you enjoy the festivities, while keeping a balanced and healthful diet.

Party snacks

- **Take control.** Before a holiday event, eat a snack or light meal. You will be less likely to fill up on high-calorie foods at the event. Fasting before an event may lead you to overeat.
- **Keep it lean.** Go for the vegetable platter and lean proteins, such as shrimp. Try to avoid creamy or fried appetizers.
- **Bring a dish.** Offer to bring a low-calorie dish to the holiday party. It will help your host and your waistline!

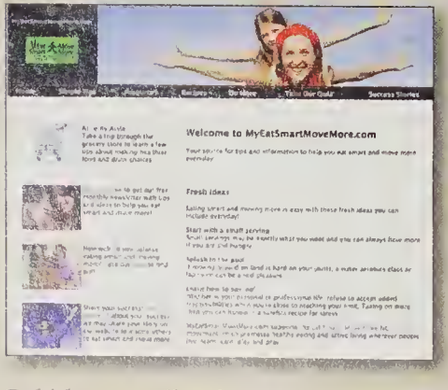
Holiday dinner

- **Pile on the veggies.** Fill up on healthful items such as vegetables, salad, and even fruit before going for the more decadent sides.
- **Reduce your portions.** Choose items you want to try the most and eat a small portion of each. This will help you keep your calories down, while still enjoying holiday favorites!
- **Eat slowly.** It takes about 20 minutes for your body to realize you are full. Make sure you slow down and savor your meal to prevent overeating.
- **Take a walk.** After your meal, get moving! It will help your body digest the food and use some of the extra calories you consumed during the meal.

Cranberries are a festive and nutritious holiday snack.

A wholesome eating resource

A statewide movement called "Eat Smart Move More North Carolina" provides lots of ideas for healthy heating, including recipes using nutritious ingredients. For example, its dessert list offers Apple Cake, Apple Crisp and Mango Berry Cobbler as well as low-calorie versions of pumpkin and sweet potato pies. For more, visit myeatsmartmovemore.com



Seasonal sweets

- **Moderation is key.** Enjoy your favorite desserts during the holiday; just be mindful of portion sizes. Sample a small amount of your favorite items. The holidays only come once a year so you should take the opportunity to enjoy the occasional sweet!
- **Share your dessert.** Cut calories in half by sharing your dessert with a friend or family member.

Most importantly, enjoy yourself by making the focus of the holiday season your family and friends, not food.

—National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Inspired doors and windows

HGTV designer provides tips for decorating doors and windows for the holidays

Homeowners looking for design inspiration for the holidays should focus on enhancing their windows and doors. That's the recommendation of designer David Bromstad of HGTV's "Design Star," "Color Splash" and "The White Room Challenge" television shows.

David, Bromstad, HGTV's "Design Star," "Color Splash" and "The White Room Challenge" television shows

"A home's windows and doors are a natural backdrop for encouraging holiday design elements," says Bromstad, president of David Bromstad Designs. "Especially during the evening, you get a warm glow coming from a home's interior that reaches out as an invitation to guests."

Bromstad recommends that homeowners be careful with how they adhere decorations to key aspects of the home—especially windows and doors—used for exiting in case of an emergency. He suggests taking the advice of leading door and window manufacturers regarding the proper way to decorate windows and doors, which includes never drilling into, or puncturing, the frame or sash of windows or doors. Such action can damage the units and void the product's warranty.

Instead, use removable hangers or attach decorations from above the frames. The experts at Simonton Windows, which produces Energy Star-qualified replacement and new construction windows and doors, recommend affixing suction cups on the window glass to hang glass ornaments, plastic snowflakes or glass icicles so that light enhances the decorations.

Known for his "out of the box" ideas, Bromstad offers these holiday tips:

- Drape live garland around window and door frame interiors and exteriors. Add something whimsical such as snowball ornaments, clothes pins that hold up brass jingle bells, miniature wrapped presents or handmade ornaments made by family members.
- Welcome the sounds of the holidays by attaching an old-fashioned leather strap with jingle bells on your home's front door.
- Create a winter wonderland inside the home by having your family make dozens of paper snowflakes. Hang them from the ceiling in the entryway and from curtain rods on windows with fishing line to create a snowy climate.

Creative wreaths

For interesting wreaths, experts at Therma-Tru Doors, a leading entryway door manufacturer, suggest creating one with magnolia leaves and fresh fruit such as pears, apples and pomegranates or theming your wreath to match your home's style. For example, if you have a rustic style home, consider adding antlers, a cowboy hat or rope to your wreath. For a coastal home, consider a wreath of woven sea grass with sea shells or a brightly painted life preserver with lights and decorative glass floats.

—Home Improvement News and Information Center

Cooking efficiently

Clever methods help you cut energy costs for holiday meals

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that cooking accounts for 4 percent of total home energy use, and this figure doesn't include the energy costs associated with refrigeration, hot water heating and dishwashing.

Make good use of your slow cooker, microwave, or toaster oven to save energy.

Fortunately, you can keep energy use down by clever cooking methods. As holiday parties and potlucks gear up, keep these helpful tips in mind to control energy costs:

- **Don't peek.** Every time the oven door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, forcing it to use more energy to get back to the proper cooking temperature.
- **Turn it down or turn it off.** For regular cooking, it's probably not necessary to have your oven on as long—or set as high—as the recipe calls for. For recipes that need to bake for longer than an hour, pre-heating the oven isn't necessary. And residual heat on an electric oven or stovetop will finish the last 5 to 10 minutes of baking time. Just remember to keep the oven door closed or the lid on until time is up. Alternately, if you're baking in a ceramic or glass dish, you can typically set your oven for 25 degrees less than the recipe calls for. Because ceramic and glass hold heat better than metal pans, your dish will cook just as well at a lower temperature.

If you're baking in a ceramic or glass dish, you can typically set your oven for 25 degrees less than the recipe calls for.

- **Clean those burners.** For your stovetop to function effectively, it's important that the metal reflectors under your electric stove burners stay free of dirt and grime.
- **Make use of your smaller appliances.** These include slow cookers, microwaves, toaster ovens, or warming plates. For example, the average toaster oven can use up to half the energy of the average electric stove over the same cooking time. Information to help you estimate how much energy your own appliances use is available on EnergySavers.gov.
- **Turn the furnace down.** If your next party involves a lot work for your stove, think about turning down your furnace to compensate. The heat of the oven and the body heat from all those guests will keep the temperature comfortable.
- **Time to update your pans?** Electric stovetops can only transmit heat to pans they are in direct contact with; the less contact your pan has with the burner, the more energy the stovetop will have to expend to heat the pan. If cooking with your warped pan is taking longer than it should, it may be time for a flat-bottomed update.

—U.S. Department of Energy

WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS?

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by Dec. 8 with your name, address and the name of your electric cooperative.

Online: carolinacountry.com

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

Multiple entries from the same person will be disqualified.

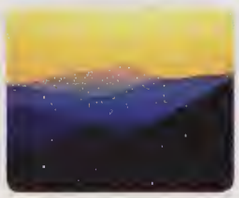
The winner, chosen at random and announced in our January issue, will receive $25. To see the answer before you get your January magazine, go to "Where Is This?" on our website carolinacountry.com

November winner

Clearly, North Carolina state prisons look similar to one another. Many of you recognized November's photo of the Maury Correctional Institution, others were slightly off the mark. Opened in 2006 and served by Pitt & Greene EMC, Maury is one of three state prisons in Greene County. It is a "close" or high security prison with a capacity of 896 male inmates, employing about 560 people. It is one of 70 in North Carolina. Other guesses were prisons in Raleigh (Central), Butner, Tyrrell County, Scotland County, Lincolnton, Tabor City, Bayboro, Winton, Alexander County, Pasquotank County and Polkton. Others were the Corning plant in Midland, Cherry State Psychiatric Hospital in Goldsboro and the Keihin manufacturing plant near Tarboro. The winning entry, chosen at random from all correct submissions, was from James Lancaster of Morehead City, a member of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative.

CAROLINA COUNTRY SCENES photo contest

Send us your favorite photo (North Carolina people or scenes) and the story that goes with it. We will pay $50 for each one that we publish in our Carolina Country Scenes gallery in the February 2014 magazine. Judges will select more for a new "Photo of the Month" feature and we'll pay $50 for those.



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I Remember...

My Lite-Brite and other gifts

During the Christmas holidays my younger brother decided to clean out the attic at the old home place. It was no surprise to find so much stuff I left behind when I first moved out in 1985.

Nevertheless, I brought my belongings home and began sorting them. Many ended up in the garbage. I couldn't believe it, though, when I came upon my Lite-Brite. It was still in the box, and written on it was "Christmas of 1970." (I always was one to take care of my toys.)

To my amazement when I plugged it in, it still worked, same bulb and all. Well, I was supposed to be doing paperwork that day but the little boy in me took over and before I knew it I was making a picture. As I sat there working on my art, many fond memories of Christmases long ago came to mind. I remembered the Rock-em Sock-em Robots and the Give-A-Show Projector.

I realized how thankful I am to God for great parents who made my childhood special. It dawned on me that my parents were really my best Christmas gift.

David Whitman, Kenansville, Tri-County EMC

The necklace

When I got married, I couldn't buy myself anything that cost very much. One Friday I went to the mall to eat and go shopping, and I saw this leopard necklace in the jewelry store. It cost too much for me to spend on myself. The next week I checked to see if they had reduced it. They hadn't. So I kept on checking for a long time. It finally was reduced, but when I went to buy it, it was gone. I was mad because I really wanted it. Three or four months went by and I had forgotten about the necklace. When I was opening my presents that Christmas, there was the necklace! It was the best surprise I think I have ever had. My mother went and bought it for me.

Diann Linebaugh, Siler City, Central EMC

Three gifts

Christmas was the best holiday in my childhood. My father was a Cherokee Indian who spoke the language fluently, and as a Baptist minister and missionary in Oklahoma, he ministered to 43 churches for 15 years. The sermon and songs were in the Cherokee language, but if there were visitors who didn't understand Cherokee, he would do part of the sermon in English.

A Christmas treat from the churches was a brown bag with an apple, orange and ribbon candy. I would eat mine very slowly to save it as long as I could. He didn't receive much in the offering, but the ladies would give him a quilt they had made during the summer or some canned goods.

My father has passed, and my husband and I raised two children and have three grandchildren. We are always together during holidays. Ask me what gifts I received last year, and I would need to think a minute. But I can always remember what I got as a child: an apple, orange and ribbon candy.

Georgia Gibson, Hurdle Mills, Piedmont EMC

My father gave his sermons in the Cherokee language.

SEND US YOUR *Memories*

We'll pay $50 for those we publish in the magazine. We can put even more on our Internet sites, but can't pay for them. (If you don't want them on the Internet, let us know.)

Guidelines:

1. Approximately 200 words.
2. Digital photos must be at least 600kb or 1200 by 800 pixels.
3. No deadline, but only one entry per household per month.
4. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want yours returned.
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7. **E-mail:** iremember@carolinacountry.com **Or by U.S. mail:** I Remember, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616

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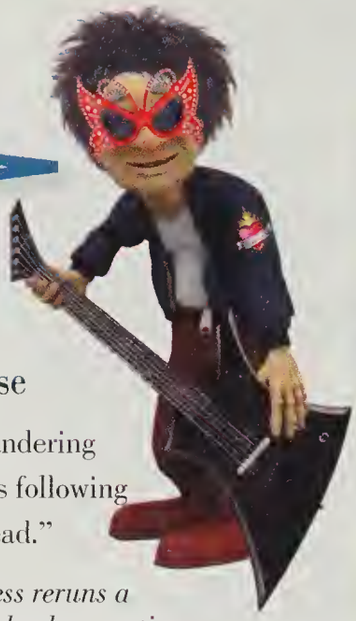
You can reach Charles Joyner by e-mail: joyner@carolinacountry.com

"And I quote"



Death in Paradise

"Poole investigates a philandering rocker whose comeback stalls following a lethal bullet in his head."

Before the advent of endless reruns a lethal bullet would stall a comeback every time.

–(from "Centerpiece," the program guide of UNC-TV)

Our Tax Dollars at Work

Recently, for a reason I have forgotten, I googled U.S. Government Publications. I learned that Uncle Sam has published more than 800 titles beginning with the words "How to" and "How." Among them are the following:

How to...avoid a midair collision... be a friend...beat the beetle...build a wren and bluebird house...buy cheese...buy a Christmas tree...capture what farmers think...change a spare tire...collect semen for analysis

and How the animals got their color
How the Milky Way got into the sky

If there is anything you would like to know, ask the government. If there is not already a publication on the subject, someone most probably will write one–maybe just for you.

Oh, Kay!

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_ _ _ _

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Loose Saggy Neck Skin – Can Any Cream Cure Turkey Neck?

DEAR DORRIS: I'm a woman who is 64 years young who suffers from really loose skin under my chin and on my lower neck.

I hate the term, but my grandkids say I have "turkey neck" and frankly, I've had enough of it! I have tried some creams designed to help tighten and firm that loose, saggy skin, but they did not work. Is there any cream out there that Might help my loose neck skin?

Turkey Neck, Durham, NC

DEAR TURKEY-NECK: In fact, there is a very potent cream on the market that is designed to firm, tighten and invigorate skin cells on the neck area. It is called the **Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream.** This cream contains an instant-effect ingredient that aims to tighten the skin naturally, as well as deep-moisturizing ingredients aiming to firm the skin and make it more supple. Amazingly, the Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream also has Stem Cells taken from Malus Domesticus, a special apple from Switzerland.

These apple stem cells target your skin's aging cells, and strive to bring back their youthful firmness, and elasticity. As an alternative to the scary surgeries or face lifts that many people resort to, this cream has the potential to deliver a big punch to the loose saggy skin of the neck. **The Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream is available online at Dermagist.com** or you can order or learn more by **calling toll-free, 888-771-5355.** Oh, I almost forgot… I was given a promo code when I placed my order that gave me 10% off. The code was **"NCN12"**. It's worth a try to see if it still works.

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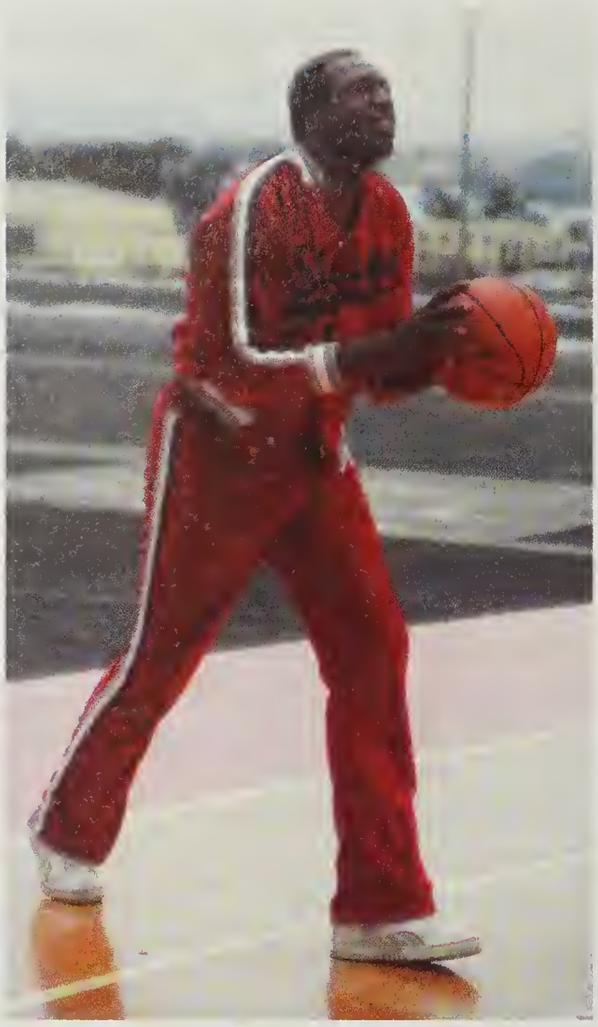


Getting To Know...

Meadowlark Lemon

Known for: Harlem Globetrotters basketball star, minister, motivational speaker

About: Born in Wilmington in 1935, Meadow "Meadowlark" Lemon first saw the Harlem Globetrotters in a movie news reel at age 11. Greatly inspired by this performance team, he rigged up a makeshift backyard hoop and started working on his shots. In high school he kept a grueling practice schedule on the courts, and it paid off with an offer to join the Globetrotters. Nicknamed "The Clown Prince of Basketball," this natural showman and gifted athlete eventually performed extraordinary feats for presidents, kings and queens.

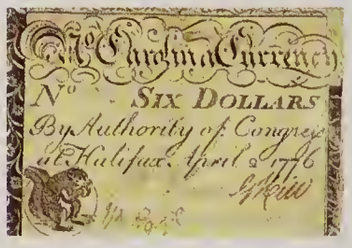
After 26 seasons, he left the Globetrotters and created his own dream teams, including today's comedic Harlem All Stars. In addition to being an NBA Basketball Hall of Famer, Meadowlark has acted in TV shows and is an ordained minister with a Doctor of Divinity degree. His book "Trust Your Next Shot" was published in 2010. The seemingly ageless hoop-master motivates kids through his Camp Meadowlark basketball camps, participates in multiple annual fundraisers and runs Meadowlark Lemon Ministries with his wife, Cynthia. For more about Meadlowlark (and to see his famous hook shot), visit meadowlarklemon.org

Bringing Halifax history alive

A new website, bradforddenton.com, helps visitors understand history in the making through the current Bradford Denton House restoration in Historic Halifax. The house's former owner, Col. John Bradford, was a delegate from Halifax County to the 4th Provincial Congress meeting at Halifax in 1776. He, along with the other delegates, took a unanimous stand to instruct North Carolina's delegates to the Continental Congress to support a separation from British rule, according to historian Jeff Dickens. This brave stance was the first such action in any of the colonies and helped shaped our state as it is today.

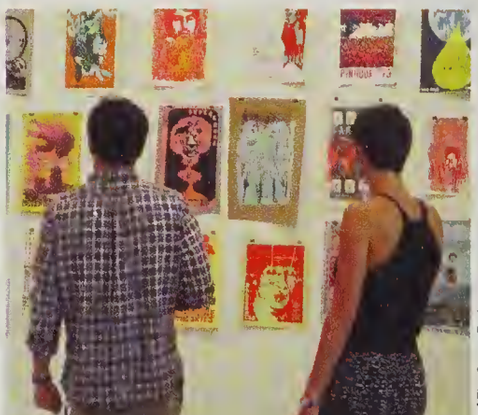
The website features photos of the circa-1760 house, along with original Halifax Resolves images; rare currency signed by John Bradford; a video that scripts the Bradfords' service to a young America and dramatic readings from Francis Asbury's journals.

Photos courtesy of Halifax County CVB



tar heel lessons

a guide to NC for teachers and students



Photos courtesy of The Scrap Exchange

Creative reuse center

The Scrap Exchange in Durham promotes environmental awareness and creativity through reuse of donated materials. The busy center boasts a store, green art gallery that showcases artists using reclaimed materials, and a Make and Take studio open to the public.

Ongoing events include workshops where trained staff integrate a teacher's classroom goals into an educational arts experience, helping kids transform clean industrial discards into science inventions, costumes for plays and toys for fun. The fee is $100 per hour for up to 15 children; $5 for each additional child. There are also professional development workshops for teachers seeking fresh ideas for projects. Contact Lindsey Miller at (919) 213-1278 or visit scrapexchange.org

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By L.A. Jackson

The berry beautiful nandina

Want to put some snap, crackle and botanical pop in your dull winter garden? Plant nandinas! Their red berries will brighten up before the Yuletide season and persist to glow cheerfully through the coldest, most drab days of the year.

Sometimes called "heavenly bamboo," nandina is actually a member of the barberry clan rather than the quick-spreading, aggressive bamboo family.

This Far East native has long been popular in Carolina gardens because of its berries and lacy, evergreen foliage. Plain ol' nandina—in botanical terms, the species Nandina domestica—will reach as high as 8 feet tall but can be lightly pruned any time of the year to keep it within proper bounds. However, if you snip this shrub back now, its pretty berries and handsome foliage can be used to accent indoor holiday arrangements.

There are nandina cultivars that restrain themselves to 4 feet tall or less. Some of the berry-producing shorties, such as 'Compacta', 'Firestorm', 'Plum Passion' and 'Harbor Dwarf', add extra appeal in the fall and winter with their foliage simmering in shades of orange, red or purple.

And while red is the normal color of nandina berries, also consider a different hue—the cultivar 'Alba' with its light yellow berries floating on a sea of pleasing, mid-green foliage.

Now is a good time to plant nandina, and once established, it is a tough, dependable plant in the landscape, being able to withstand the wildest swings in Carolina weather, from summer swelter to freezing cold. Although it isn't especially particular about growing ground, nandina shows off best in fertile soil that has been well-worked. It can be located in sun to moderate shade and is rarely bothered by pests or diseases. As a bonus, this berry beautiful shrub is very low on the list of plants favored by grazing deer.

Garden To Do's

December

- You did start a compost pile this fall, didn't you? If so, it should be well on its way to heating up and breaking down by now, but to prevent cold winter rains from slowing down the decomposition process, cover the pile with a plastic sheet. This has the extra advantage of collecting and trapping more heat from the sun.
- Add mulch around newly planted evergreens and water them during extended periods when the rains don't come, as, even in the winter, drought can be a problem for these woody ornamentals.
- Tubes from Christmas wrapping paper can be snipped into 4-inch-long sections and recycled in next year's spring garden as cutworm collars.
- Rotate African violets a quarter turn every two weeks to prevent the plants from growing off-center as they lean towards their light source.
- Inspect houseplants periodically this winter for signs of insect activity and dispatch any immature invaders before they can become a full-blown infestation.

Tip of the Month

If you received an amaryllis bulb for Christmas that has not bloomed yet, to encourage it to show off indoors this winter, remember the key is to crowd it. The space between the bulb and the edges of the pot should be no more than an inch. Also, the heavier the pot, the less likely this beauty will tip over when it reaches its full height and begins to flower. To help the blooms last longer, keep the plant away from dry air drafts that come from heating vents and open exterior doors.

January

- Don't kick the Christmas tree to the curb just yet. Set it up in the backyard as a wild bird haven and make it more hospitable to your winged friends by redecorating with seed bells, suet bars and strings of berries.
- Shrubs and small trees that were root-pruned last fall can be transplanted starting at the end of the month.
- To prevent damage to branches, brush snow off of evergreens as soon as possible. Fresh snow is easily removed, while snow that is allowed to refreeze stubbornly clings to foliage.
- Is your winter landscape looking too brown, too gray, too dull? Liven it up by applying brightly colored spray paints to dried grass stems and empty seed pods.
- Speaking of winter color, stop by your local garden center, botanical garden or arboretum to see how conifers are lighting up their landscapes naturally in various shades of green, gold, burgundy, copper and bronze.

L.A. Jackson is the former editor of Carolina Gardener Magazine. If you would like to ask him a question about your garden, contact L.A. at: lajackson1@gmail.com.

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By James Dulley

The importance of insulation

Determining the amount is the key to energy savings

It's generally understood that adding insulation to the walls or ceiling of a house will reduce monthly utility bills. The actual amount of savings for each home depends upon several factors—the current level of its insulation, climate, utility rates and the HVAC system's efficiency.

The current level of insulation is perhaps the most important factor in deciding whether or not to add more and how much. For example, doubling the amount of insulation in an attic not yet well insulated can cut heat loss through the ceiling by about half. A reliable contractor can help you determine the payback from the savings as compared to the installation costs.

If you double that amount again and super-insulate the attic floor, it will cut the original heat by only another 25 percent (half of half). This diminishing return is important to keep in mind when determining the amount of insulation to add.

Standard fiberglass blanket/batt insulation being installed in a wall. The kraft paper vapor barrier is stapled to the wall studs.

This batt insulation is made from recycled cotton denim from blue jean production waste. It is treated for fire safety.

Heat loss

Various types of insulation can be used to reduce conductive heat loss and/or radiant heat loss. Standard fiberglass batts, blown-in fiberglass, cellulose, rock wool, foam, all are used to block conductive heat loss. This is the kind of heat transfer that travels through materials, such as drywall, studs, bricks, etc.

Radiant heat transfer is the way the sun heats the earth, and your house also loses heat to the cold outdoor air and nighttime sky by this method. Radiant barrier insulation, often an aluminum foil film, is effective for blocking this heat loss. Some standard insulation batts include a foil facing to reduce both types of heat loss.

Insulation will make you feel more comfortable. If you are in a room at 70 degrees with little wall insulation, you may still feel chilly. This is because the exterior walls are cold and your body is losing its warmth by radiant heat transfer to the walls. During the summer, a hot wall makes you feel uncomfortably warm.

Installed R-value

More important than its thickness is insulation's installed R-value—a measure of its ability to retard heat flow. Some types have twice the R-value per inch thickness as others. Also, blown-in insulation can be fluffed up when installed, not necessarily intentionally, resulting in less true R-value. Make sure your insulation contract specifies the final insulation R-value, not just the thickness.

You might consider an environmentally friendly insulation made of recycled materials, such as scrap blue jean material. It looks similar to chopped up blue jeans in batt form. It is treated for fire safety and has an insulating R-value similar to fiberglass batts.

Recycled products

Fiberglass is made basically from sand. Some manufacturers use 25 percent recycled glass, so check the packaging if you prefer recycled products. Rock wool insulation is made primarily from waste products. It and fiberglass have an insulation value of about R-3 per inch thickness.

If insulation space is limited, as in a masonry wall, injected foam is a good option. Look for foam that uses no ozone-layer-damaging foaming agents.

Another option to minimize voids is a blown-in-blanket method. Another similar system adds binders to the insulation to reduce settling.

Send inquiries to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit dulley.com.

These companies offer insulation materials:

Bonded Logic (480) 812-9114
bondedlogic.com

Certainteed (800) 782-8777
certainteed.com

Icynene (800) 758-7325
icynene.com

Johns Manville (800) 654-3103
jm.com

Owens Corning
owenscorning.com

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December Events

Because they are less expensive to buy, Biltmore Estate in Buncombe County uses incandescent bulbs on the 55-foot tree. Many inside displays, including permanent ones, use lower wattage, longer-lasting LEDs. Visit the Biltmore Estate through Jan. 4 for Candlelight Christmas Evenings. *See details on page 39.*

Mountains (west of I-77)

Hometown Christmas Parade
Dec. 7, Murphy
(828) 837-6821

Saturday With Santa
Dec. 7, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
ashecountyarts.org

Holiday Tour Of Homes
Dec. 7, Lenoir
(828) 754-6263
robinsnestcac.org

Santa On The Chimney
Dec. 7 & 14, Chimney Rock
(828) 625-9611
chimneyrockpark.com

Fireside Sale
Dec. 8, Brasstown
(828) 837-2775
folkschool.org

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For March: Jan. 25
For April: Feb. 25

Submit Listings Online:
Visit carolinacountry.com and click "Carolina Adventures" to add your event to the magazine and/or our website. Or e-mail events@carolinacountry.com.

Christmas Parade
Dec. 8, Statesville
(704) 546-5826

Ashe Choral Society
Dec. 8, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
ashecountyarts.org

Night Time Christmas Parade
Dec. 14, Andrews
(828) 321-4377

Candlelight Service
Dec. 24, Terrell
(828) 478-2581
rehobethumc.org

New Year's Eve Possum
Dec. 31, Brasstown
(828) 837-3797

New Year's Eve Extravaganza
Dec. 31, Blowing Rock
(877) 295-7801
appskimtn.com

ONGOING

Street Dance
Monday nights, Hendersonville
(828) 693-9708
historichendersonville.org

Guided House Tours
Wednesday–Saturdays, Marion
(828) 724-4948
historiccarsonhouse.com

Bluegrass Music Jam
Thursdays, Marion
(828) 652-2215

Art Crawl
First Friday monthly, Boone
(828) 262-4532
downtownboonenc.com

Concerts At The Creek
Fridays, Sylva
(800) 962-1911
mountainlovers.com

Live Bluegrass Music
Fridays through Dec. 26, Union Mills
(828) 748-7956
unionmillslearningcenter.org

Festival Of Trees
Through Dec. 28, Sparta
(336) 372-8062
coolsparta.com

Piedmont (between I-77 & I-95)

Christmas Craft Show
Dec. 1, Hillsborough
(919) 732-8714

Moravian Love Feast
Dec. 1, Fayetteville
(910) 630-7157
methodist.edu

Poinsettia Display
Dec. 1, King
(336) 983-4107
mitchellsnurseryandgreenhouse.com

Ventriloquist/Comedian Jeff Dunham
Dec. 4, Fayetteville
(910) 438-4100
atthecrown.com

Christmas Bazaar
Dec. 5, Winston Salem
((336) 722-1921

Catch Spirit Of Christmas
Dec. 6–7, Snow Camp
(336) 376-8200
www.siloamhomes.org

Singing Christmas Tree
Dec. 5–8, Fayetteville
(910) 484-3191

Yuletide Feast
Dec. 6–7, Fayetteville
(910) 630-7602

Craft Show
Dec. 7, Charlotte
(704) 843-0525

Victorian Christmas Tea
RSVP required
Dec. 7, Dallas
(704) 922-7681
gastoncountymuseum.org

Colonial Christmas Open House
Dec. 7, Raleigh
(919) 833-3431
joellane.org

Christmas Holiday Craft Show
Dec. 7, Chapel Hill
(919) 929-1546
st-thomasmore.org

Holiday Market
Dec. 7, Wake Forest
(919) 671-9269
wakeforestfarmersmarket.org

Welcome To December
Christmas Concert
Dec. 7, Lexington
(336) 956-8814
lexingtonchoralsociety.org

Christmas Parade & Festival of Lights
Dec. 7, Hope Mills
(910) 424-4500

Christmas Remembered
Dec. 7, Fayetteville
(910) 486-0221
capefearbg.org

Walk To The Stable
Dec. 7–8, Statesville
(704) 872-6097
newsalemmethodist.org

Toy Train Show
Dec. 7–8, Raleigh
(919) 731-7027
se-tca.org

Holiday Home Tour
Dec. 8, Hillsborough
(919) 732-8156
hillsboroughchamber.com

Holiday Jubilee
Dec. 8, Fayetteville
(910) 486-1330

Christmas Parade
Dec. 8, Kernersville
(336) 993-4521
kernersvillenc.com

Fort Bragg Christmas Tree Lighting
Dec. 9, Fayetteville
(910) 396-9126

Christmas Village
Dec. 13, Belmont
(704) 825-5586

Holiday Open House
Dec. 13, Dallas
(704) 922-7681
gastoncountymuseum.org

Holiday House Tour
Dec. 14–15, Chapel Hill
(919) 942-7818
preservationchapelhill.org

Christmas Flotilla
Dec. 12, Lumberton
(910) 739-9999
www.ci.lumberton.nc.us.

Christmas Parade
Dec. 14, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311

Celebration Of The Nativity
Dec. 15, Denton
(336) 859-4742

Handel's Messiah
Dec. 15, Fayetteville
(910) 433-4690

Candlelight Loft Tours
Dec. 15, Fayetteville
(910) 222-3282

Historic Churches Tour
Dec. 16, Fayetteville
(910) 433-1457

Disney On Ice! Let's Celebrate
Dec. 18–21, Fayetteville
(910) 438-4100

Winter Gathering
Lumbee Elders Circle
Dec. 19-22, Pembroke
(910) 740-2327

Historic Christmas Church Tour
Dec. 20, Spencer
(704) 239-3729
spencerhometownholidays.com

A Christmas Carol Unplugged
Dec. 20 & 22, High Point
(336) 887-3001
highpointtheatre.com

New Years Flea Drop
Dec. 31, Eastover
(910) 483-5311

ONGOING

Maness Pottery & Music Barn
Dinner, music, fellowship
Tuesday nights, Midway
(910) 948-4897
liveatclydes.com

Durham Civil War Roundtable
Third Thursdays, Durham
(919) 643-0466

Art After Hours
Second Fridays, Wake Forest
(919) 570-0765
sunflowerstudiowf.com

Betty Lynn (Thelma Lou)
Andy Griffith Museum
Third Fridays, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
visitmayberry.com

Arts Councils' Fourth Friday
Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
theartscouncil.org

The Photography Of Lewis Hine
"Exposing Child Labor in NC 1908-1918"
Through Dec. 5, Fayetteville
(910) 486-1330
museumofthecapefear.ncdcr.gov

A Christmas Carol
Through Dec. 15, Fayetteville
(910) 678-7186
thegilberttheater.com

Country Christmas Train
Through Dec. 26, Denton
(336) 859-2755
countrychristmastrain.com

Bluegrass Music
Saturdays through Dec. 31, Mt. Gilead
(910) 220-6426
mgmusicbarn.com

Mammal Safari
Through Dec. 31, Gastonia
(704) 866-6908
schielemuseum.org

Cumberland County Goes to War
Through December 31, Fayetteville
(910) 433-1457
fcpr.us/transportation_museum.aspx

Find lights galore at Denton FarmPark's Country Christmas Train. Ride the train while viewing lights and a Nativity movie along the way. Sing carols, visit the Gingerbread House, view arts & crafts exhibits, see Santa, enjoy treats and more. Held Nov. 30–Dec. 1, and Dec. 6–8; 12–15; 19–23; and 26. Call (336) 859-2755 or visit countrychristmastrain.com

The annual Kernersville Christmas parade features five marching bands, fire trucks, motorcycles, dance groups, floats and an appearance from Santa. It begins at Hwy 66 and East Mountain Street. Call (336) 993-4521 or visit kernersvillenc.com to learn more.

Twelve Days Of Christmas
Through Dec. 31, Chapel Hill
(919) 918-2715
carolinainn.com

A Victorian Christmas
Through Jan. 4, Fayetteville
(910) 486-1330
museumofthecapefear.ncdcr.gov

Porsche By Design
Exhibit explores car's history
Through Jan. 20, Raleigh
(919) 664-6773
ncartmuseum.org

The Art Of Giving
Artwork for the holiday season
Through Jan. 12, Hillsborough
(919) 732-5001
hillsboroughgallery.com

Evolution Of Recorded Sound
Through Mar. 8, Dallas
(704) 825-4044
gastoncountymuseum.org

Christmas Town USA
Dec. 2–26, McAdenville
(704) 823-2260
mcadenville-christmastown.com

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
Dec. 5–15, Fayetteville
(910) 323-4234
cfrt.org

Christmas In The Park
Dec. 6–22, Fayetteville
(910) 433-1547

Studio Tour
Dec. 7–15, Chatham County
(919) 542-6418

12 Nights Of Glowing
Holiday lights in garden
Dec. 7–22, Fayetteville
(910) 486-0221
capefearbg.org

A Victorian Era Christmas
Dec. 10–Jan. 4, Fayetteville
(910) 433-1457

The SantaLand Diaries
Dec. 13–21, Fayetteville
(910) 323-4234

Coast (east of I-95)

Christmas Parade
Dec. 1, Scotland Neck
(252) 826-3152
townofscotlandneck.com

Keyboard Chamber Music Concert
Dec. 2, Greenville
(252) 328-6851
ecu.edu

Nature Trek With Ranger
Dec. 3, Swansboro
(910) 326-2600

Holiday Jewelry
Dec. 5, Swansboro
(910) 326-2600
swansboro-nc.org

Kids Night In Parents Night Out
Dec. 6, Swansboro
(910) 326-2600

Gymboree Vendor & Craft Show
Dec. 7, Aulander
(252) 642-5772

Christmas Parade
Dec. 7, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
greenvillejaycees.com

Christmas Parade
Dec. 7, Fountain
(252) 814-7118

Making Holiday Treats
With "The Coastal Kitchen"
Dec. 7, Sunset Beach
(910) 575-0033
museumplanetarium.org

Christmas Tour Of Homes
Dec. 7, Washington
(252) 946-2504

Gingerbread House Decorating
Dec. 7, Swansboro
(910) 326-2600
swansboro-nc.org

Waterfowl Weekend
Dec. 7–8, Harkers Island
(252) 728-1500
coresound.com

Christmas Open House
Dec. 8, Windsor
(252) 794-3140
hopeplantation.org

Tales From Old Bridge
Speaker shares history insights
Dec. 10, Ocean Isle Beach
(910) 579-1016
museumplanetarium.org

Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats
Dec. 12, Rocky Mount
(252) 985-5197
ncwc.edu/arts/dunncenter/

Cookie Swap
Dec. 12, Swansboro
(910) 326-2600
swansboro-nc.org

Bon Voyage Voyager
Dec. 13, Sunset Beach
(910) 575-0033
museumplanetarium.org

Santa & A Movie
Dec. 13, Swansboro
(910) 326-2600
swansboro-nc.org

Christmas Parade
Dec. 14, Bethel
(252) 825-6191
bethelnc.org

Christmas Parade
Dec. 14, Winterville
(252) 756-2221
wintervillenc.com

Christmas Parade
Dec. 14, Farmville
(252) 753-5774
farmville-nc.com

Oysters: Food, Filter, Fun
Dec. 17, Swansboro
(910) 326-2600
swansboro-nc.org

Master Gardener Class
Deadline to register
Dec. 18, Bolivia
(910) 253-2610
brunswick.ces.ncsu.edu

Steve Hardy's Original Beach Party
Dec. 19, Greenville
(252) 321-7671
originalbeach1.com

Holiday Decoration Storage & Organization
Dec. 19, Swansboro
(910) 326-2600
swansboro-nc.org

Christmas Parade
Dec. 21, Ayden
(252) 746-2266
aydenchamber.com

Ingram Planetarium Shows
Dec. 26–28, Sunset Beach
(910) 575-0033
museumplanetarium.org

ONGOING

Art Walk
First Friday, Elizabeth City
(252) 335-5330
http://ecncart.com

Art Walk
First Friday, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
uptowngreenville.com

Making Of Gone With The Wind
Movie costumes, props, memorabilia
Through Dec., Elizabeth City
(252) 335-1453
museumofthealbemarle.com

Dead Wood Western Theme Park
Through Dec., Williamston
(252) 792-8516
visitmartincounty.com

Festival Of Trees
Dec. 2–19, Greenville
(252) 328-9332
fsnenc.org

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WHAT'S IN A WORD
It is the only word in the english language spelled with contiguous letters of the alphabet.

UNSCRAMBLE IT
LOVE OF MIKE

MATCH BOXES
10618 72 94536
CATCH MY DRIFT

CAROLINA COUNTRY adventures

Selecting bulbs for three big Christmas light displays

by Robin J. Minnick

Anyone who puts up decorative lights knows how expensive it can get. For many of us that means turning to LED lights that can use 80 to 90 percent less electricity. But the question is, how good are they? Some North Carolina enterprises are finding out.

Biltmore Estate near Asheville uses LEDs in permanent displays and incandescents for temporary ones. "The wiring on LED strands is thicker and less workable than the incandescent," says floral displays manager Cathy Barnhardt. She is not satisfied with the visibility of LEDs, which appear dim at some angles. Because incandescents are less expensive to buy, Biltmore Estate still uses them on its 55-foot tree. The estate did convert lights on its huge Banquet Hall tree to LEDs. Incandescents dry out the tree faster, they reported, making it a fire hazard. And the lower-wattage LEDs are less likely to blow fuses in historic house settings.

Three smaller North Carolina venues—Meadow Lights near Benson (Johnston County), High Country Lights in Ennice (Alleghany County), and Lu Mil Vineyard in Elizabethtown (Bladen County)—are converting gradually to LED.

Meadow Lights uses individual bulbs, swapping out an entire display at a time. "You can't mix 'em," says Ray Jones, because the quality of light in an LED is different from an incandescent. "It's kind of expensive at the outset, and we don't really know yet if we'll make up the difference."

High Country Lights' William Bottomley has so far replaced 20,000 of his 70,000 lights with commercial LEDs. He's delighted with the versatility the numerous styles provide, from the large C9 to the nightlight-sized C7 to the 5MM resembling a pencil eraser. "Only your imagination is holding back on this one," he said. "They can be used almost in any and every way possible." He's not worried about breakage either. "Most LEDs a person can walk on, and some can even have a tractor-trailer driven on them."

In an agricultural setting like Lu Mil Vineyard, every activity requires efficiency, particularly for a side of the business that runs only one month. Owner Ron Taylor says LEDs' low wattage doesn't need the additional infrastructure it would take to run a comparable number of incandescent: "With LED we can have a lot more lights." This year they will add about 25,000 LED lights to their existing 400,000-light arrangement. Taylor thinks LEDs are better quality. "Incandescents get so hot, the paint fades and changes the color." Newly built giant ornaments will have near-permanent lighting. The LEDs' lifetime of 10-11 years makes that practical.

Robin Minnick is a freelance writer, part-time parish administrator and forever Mom. She lives in Fayetteville.

Meadow Lights near Benson

How to see these light displays

Meadow Lights
4546 Godwin Lake Rd
Benson, NC, 27504
(919) 669-5969
meadowlights.com

- Nov. 22–Dec. 31, Sun.–Thurs., 5–10 p.m.; Fri. & Sat., 5-11 p.m.
- Free

High Country Lights
Glade Valley Fire Dept.
6374 Glade Valley Road
Ennice, NC 28623
highcountrylights.com

- Nov. 28–Jan. 1, 6–10 p.m.
- Free

Festival of Lights
Lu Mil Vineyard
438 Suggs-Taylor Rd.
Elizabethtown, NC 28337
(910) 862-1603
lumilvineyard.com

- Nov. 30 & Dec. 1, then Thursdays and Sundays, Dec. 12–23
- 6–10 p.m.
- $5 per person

Candlelight Christmas Evenings
Biltmore House
Asheville, NC 28803
(800) 411-3812
biltmore.com

- Nov. 9–Jan. 4 (except Nov 26 & 28, Dec. 24 & 25)
- Reserved tickets (includes day visit) $69 adults, $34.50 ages 10–16, Sun.–Thurs.; $79 adults, $39.50 ages 10–16, Fri. & Sat.

By Hannah McKenzie

Cleaning the Air: Part I

Q: Would installing an air cleaner be beneficial for my health or my home's cleanliness? What are the options?

A: Unfortunately, air cleaners cannot replace routine house cleaning or Fido's bath, but they can improve indoor air quality. Using air cleaners has not been proven to reduce the symptoms of chronic respiratory illnesses such as asthma; however, many people, including my husband, claim relief from indoor air allergies.

You should take three steps before considering an air cleaner.

1. Eliminate the sources of air contaminants.
2. Introduce ventilation to remove contaminants.
3. Clean.

Duct sealing may eliminate a source of dust, and installing bathroom exhaust fans is an example of ventilation. Cleaning can be improved by investing in a HEPA vacuum cleaner.

There are four basic air cleaning technologies. Mechanical air filters such as HEPA filters capture particles like dust, pet dander and pollen. Electronic air cleaners such as electrostatic precipitators give particulates an electric charge that causes the dust to cling to a surface inside the air cleaner. This is the same concept as your hair clinging to a balloon.

Some electronic air cleaners exhaust the charged particles, which end up clinging and staining nearby walls and furniture. Obviously not a terrific option. There is also ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) and photocatalytic oxidation (PCO). UVGI is intended to kill most mold spores and bacteria. PCO air cleaners tout the ability to kill gaseous pollutants. UVGI and PCO are often marginally effective in household air cleaners.

It is extremely important to avoid ozone generators that are sold as air cleaners. Ozone gas is a lung irritant that is known to cause adverse health effects. For more information visit: epa.gov/iaq/pubs/ozonegen.html.

James Dulley

Three filter elements inside this portable four-speed HEPA air purifier allow for greater air flow capacity. The black carbon filter lining is intended to remove odors.

Portable Room Air Cleaners

Most people are familiar with portable room air cleaners found in stores like Walmart or Target. They are also found online ranging in price from $50 to $300.

Standing in the store aisle, your brain may turn to putty as you try to decipher the fantastic claims and space-age technology. Focus on the goal: you want the most effective portable room air cleaner for a home environment. The winner is a mechanical air filter.

Your budget will dictate whether you get a HEPA-type filter or a true HEPA filter. True HEPA filters are preferable because they capture 99.97 percent of particles that have a size of 0.3 microns or larger. To understand this scale, dust mites are about 250 microns while the allergens they produce can be as small as 20 microns. One type of cat allergen ranges in size from two to 10 microns.

As you can imagine, larger particles like pollen, fur or dust mites are heavier and may not be airborne long enough to reach the air cleaner. This is why washing your bed sheets is more effective than using an air cleaner for these particles.

Evaluate the cost and ease of maintenance before making a final decision. If the unit requires replacement filters every six months, make sure new filters can be found and the cost fits your budget. Also, consider the cost of electricity. If you run a 100-watt air cleaner in your bedroom each night for eight hours, you will spend around $40 per year.

There is also the option of whole house air cleaners. We will chat about those options next month.

For more information visit: epa.gov/iaq/pubs/airclean.html.

Hannah McKenzie is a residential building science consultant for Advanced Energy (advancedenergy.org) in Raleigh.

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BECOME AN ORDAINED MINISTER, Correspondence study. Founded in 1988. Luke 17:2, Free information. Ministers for Christ Outreach, 7558 West Thunderbird Road, Ste 1-114, Peoria, AZ 85381. www.ordination.org

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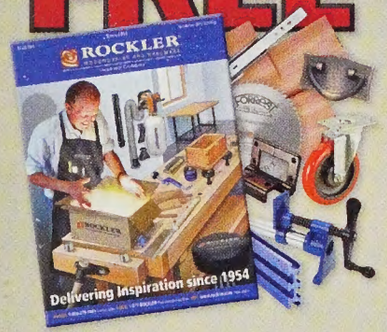

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Cheese Straws

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- ¾ cup cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground red pepper
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon whole milk

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside.

In the work bowl of a food processor, add flour, cheese, butter, salt, peppers and paprika; pulse to combine. With food processor running, add milk in a slow steady stream until mixture forms a dough.

Using a cookie press fitted star-shaped disk, pipe dough into long straight lines on the prepared pans; cut into 4-inch pieces.*

Bake until lightly browned, 18 to 20 minutes. Let cool on pans on wire racks. Store in an airtight container up to 5 days.

Yield: approximately 4 dozen

**Note: If you don't have a cookie press, roll dough to a half-inch thickness and cut into 4-inch strips.*

White Chocolate Cranberry Toffee

- 54 saltine crackers
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 can (14 ounce) sweetened condensed milk
- 6 squares (1 ounce) white chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- ½ cup chopped sweetened dried cranberries

Preheat oven to 425 degrees Line a 15-by-10-inch jelly-roll pan with heavy duty aluminum foil. Spray foil with nonstick cooking spray.

Arrange saltines in an even layer on prepared pan.

In a medium saucepan, bring butter and brown sugar to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook for 2 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in condensed milk. Pour mixture over crackers.

Bake for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with chopped white chocolate. Let stand for 1 to 2 minutes to soften. Using a small offset spatula, spread softened chocolate evenly over baked toffee. Sprinkle with pecans and cranberries. Let cool completely.

Break toffee into cracker size pieces. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Yield: approximately 4½ dozen pieces

Chocolate Mint Fudge

- 1⅔ cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon salted butter; divided
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ⅔ cup heavy whipping cream
- 1¾ cups chopped white baking chocolate, such as Ghirardelli, divided
- 2 cups miniature marshmallows
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon peppermint extract
- 4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 tablespoons crushed soft peppermint candy

Line an 8- or 9-inch pan with aluminum foil, allowing ends to extend over sides of pan. Spray foil with nonstick cooking spray.

In a medium heavy saucepan, combine sugar, 2 tablespoons butter, and salt; stir in cream. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring frequently. Cook 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove from heat. Add 1½ cups white chocolate, marshmallows, vanilla and peppermint extract. Stir until mostly smooth, approximately 2 minutes. Spread mixture into prepared pan.

Melt bittersweet chocolate according to package directions; stir in remaining 1 teaspoon butter. Gently spread over white chocolate mixture in pan. Melt remaining ¼ cup white chocolate according to package directions. Drizzle over bittersweet chocolate; gently swirl with the tip of a knife. Sprinkle with crushed peppermint. Let stand in a cool dry place until firm, approximately 4 hours.

Remove from pan using edges of foil as handles. Gently peel foil from sides of fudge. Cut into squares. Store, covered, in a cool dry place up to 7 days.

Yield: approximately 8 servings

From Your Kitchen

Chicken Spread

- 1 can (12.5 ounce) chicken breast, drained and flaked
- 2 cartons (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
- ¾ package ranch dressing mix
- ⅛ teaspoon ground pepper (use more or less to taste)

Mix all ingredients until blended and smooth. Mixture will be very thick. Serve with crackers of your choice. (To use this as a Chicken Ball, roll the mixture into a ball and coat with pecans.)

Karen Richardson of Emerald Isle, a member of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative

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